

OLD NORTH CHURCH
(Breen Residence)
Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore
102 West Beverly Drive
Beverly Shores
Porter County
Indiana

HABS NO. IN-261

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PHOTOGRAPHS

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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Location: 102 West Beverly Drive, Beverly Shores, Porter County, Indiana. Lot 12 Block 122 in Robert Bartlett's subdivision Unit F.

Significance: The Old North Church is the only remaining structure of the ten Colonial Village buildings that real-estate Robert Bartlett moved to his subdivision at Beverly Shores, Indiana, from the 1933-34 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition. The church, now used as a private residence, is a loose copy of the historic Old North Church in Boston, Massachusetts.

Description: The Old North Church was converted from a single-room religious structure to a private residence according to plans designed by Tucson, Arizona architect Hal Driggs in 1989. Although the interior has been altered significantly, the house's exterior retains much of its original appearance. The structure consists of one large rectangular area with a gable roof preceeded by a classical portico. The portico has eight Doric columns, six free-standing and two engaged. It has a gabled roof with a classical dentil cornice running around its pediment.

The house has three original arched windows, two large and one smaller. The large windows located to either side of the portico consist of forty rectangular fixed lights topped by a lunette with radial mullions. The smaller window located in the central bay of the building above the portico has twenty-four rectangular fixed lights and a lunette with radial mullions. There are three windows on either side of the main part of the building, each consisting of a sash window with two lights and a single fixed-light clerestory. The upstairs reading alcove has three sash windows with two lights each framed by shutters.

The house has four exterior doors: the front entrance capped with a classical pediment, an east-side entrance that leads to the basement, a west entrance from a deck and a back entrance from a screened-in porch. The steeple was removed sometime in the last twenty years after it became structurally unsound. The house is wood-frame construction with thick wood beam cross-bracing and exterior brick sheathing.

The interior of the building has been completely remodeled. The bell tower that originally had a low ceiling and pull-down ladders has been converted into a stairwell with stairs leading down to the basement and up to the second-story bedrooms and third-story reading alcove. The bell itself has been lowered one story and now hangs in the stairwell. Some of the character of the one-room church has been maintained by having an open-planned living room flowing into a dining room and a kitchen. In between the kitchen and living room at the rear of the house, a powder room has been

installed where the pulpit was located in the Unitarian church. In the living room, structural beams have been exposed, and a fireplace was added where a door was originally located.

The second floor consists of a bridge running the length of the living room leading to a sleeping loft with two bedrooms on either side of a full bathroom. On the third floor, a small room with a parapet contains enough space for a single bed.

Refinished after 1989, the basement contains a storage area under the steps, two bedrooms, a sitting area, a bathroom, a utility room and a hall with several built-in closets.

A deck runs along the west facade of the house and wraps around to a screened-in porch with a gabled roof and four skylights that has been added to the rear of the house. The porch is accessible from the deck and from the kitchen and has a door that leads to a small area where firewood is stored.

A gazebo marks in front of the house and to the east marks the entrance path that leads to the front door.

The house has well water, a retention tank, and forced-air gas heat.

History: The Old North Church was added to the Chicago Century of Progress Exposition for its 1934 season only. It was located at the head of Milk Street between the Village Smithy and the Betsy Ross House in the Colonial Village, a display loosely representing significant buildings from the early history of the United States. The Colonial Village itself was situated between the 23rd and 31st street entrances on a piece of land between Columbus and Leif Erikson Drives just off of the Village Plaza. Not officially considered an exhibition, the village was included as a part of the Concessions Division.

As a result, fifteen separate theme groups including the Colonial Village were constructed for the 1934 season. Concession space was at a premium with restaurateurs paying the fair seventeen and one half percent of their gross earnings and renting the ground from \$2,000 to \$5,000 as sub-concessioners of the village; in addition, individual villages payed a flat twenty-five percent of gross from admission, sales, etc.¹ The concessions became oversold and profits were much less than expected; the Colonial Village, the third most successful concession for the 1934 season, had only grossed \$74,000 by October 5, 1934, and had been forced to lower

¹ "A Century of Progress Paradox," Architectural Forum 61 (November 1934): 376.

its admission price from twenty-five to fifteen cents.²

According to Thomas E. Tallmadge, architect of the complex, "the Colonial Village attempts to reproduce the form and the spirit of a typical American community as it might have been found at about the end of the Revolutionary War."³ The village represented two main historical periods: the Early American Period (1630-1700) and the Georgian Period (1700-1800). Replicas of a Pilgrim settlement, the Paul Revere House and the House of the Seven Gables illustrated the former while seventeen buildings reproduced the latter. A main street called Milk Street and a village green served as the primary public spaces, around which replicas of significant buildings from the colonial period were arranged.

The reproduction was a loose one: "In order that the whole may be harmonious many of the buildings have been reduced in size and some changed in form, but in each case it is hoped that the character has been maintained."⁴ In the case of the Old North Church, the building was reproduced at a reduced scale and with an added classical portico. The architect wrote, "As everyone knows, the original had no portico. This was added for convenience and beauty and is typical of churches in the latter part of the century."⁵ Such a loose interpretation was consistent with all of the buildings in the complex with the exception of Mount Vernon, a quite literal replica.⁶

The original Old North Church on Salem Street in Boston, Massachusetts, was built by William Price in 1723. Its steeple has become famous as the place, immortalized by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, where a friend of Paul Revere hung midnight lanterns indicating the direction of the British attack. The steeple at the fair imitating where lanterns "One if by land and two if by sea" were hung appears to have been a closer replica than the steeple erected after the church was moved to Beverly Shores. An early drawing of the church at the fair indicates windows and a clock in the steeple arranged in a manner similar to the Boston original.

² "A Century of Progress Paradox," 377.

³ Thomas E. Tallmadge, The Colonial Village: a Reproduction of Early American Life in the Thirteen Colonies, A Guide to the Buildings of Historical Interest at A Century of Progress (Chicago: Ben Franklin Print Shop, 1934): 1.

⁴ Tallmadge, 1.

⁵ Tallmadge, 9.

⁶ Tallmadge, 14.

A photograph taken after the move to Beverly Shores shows a steeple completed sheathed in brick without a clock or windows. Today the spire has been entirely removed and only the steeple base remains.

The most notable feature of the original church missing in the reproduction is a simple, rounded apse at the church's far end. Michael Breen, current owner of the house, indicated that local residents recall that the end of the replica had been lost during transportation by barge to Beverly Shores.⁷ This story seems unlikely as the building appears of have been brought by truck.⁸ As all of the photos from the fair were taken from the front entrance, I was unable to tell if an apse or any rear extension ever existed.

After the fair closed on October 31, 1934, ten of the original twenty buildings in the Colonial Village were purchased by real-estate developer Robert Bartlett and transported to Beverly Shores by truck. These included: Mount Vernon, Old North Church, the Governor's Mansion, Ben Franklin House, Paul Revere Home, the Wayside Inn, the Village Smith, the House of the Seven Gables, the Wakefield House and the Virginia Tavern. By 1938 most of the houses had been purchased. Mount Vernon had just been sold as a hotel and tea-room, the Old North Church had an active Presbyterian parish, the Virginia Tavern was being used as a bar, and the Ben Franklin home and the Paul Revere House had private owners. Robert Bartlett continued to own the House of the Seven Gables, the Governor's Mansion, and the Wakefield Cottage. The article did not report on the ownership of the Village Smithy or the Wayside Inn.⁹ An earlier article mentioned that the Village Smith had become the garage for the Wayside Inn which was to be redecorated by Mrs. Bert Laudermilk and used as a place for holding Women's Club meetings.¹⁰

⁷ Michael Breen, current owner of Old North Church, Beverly Shores, interview by Maria F. Ali, 6 August 1994, tape recording, Historic American Buildings Survey, Washington, D.C.

⁸ "Off to a New Home" and "Start Work on Virginia Inn," newspaper articles in Ann Carlson's scrapbook, Beverly Shores, Indiana. These articles indicate that although plans were made to barge the Colonial Village buildings, they were actually brought to Beverly Shores by truck.

⁹ "Chicagoans Buy Beverly Home; to Open Tea-Room," Michigan City (Indiana) News-Dispatch, 1 September 1938, 8.

¹⁰ "To Open 6 World's Fair Homes Soon for Inspection," newspaper article in Ann Carlson's scrapbook, Beverly Shores, Indiana. This article also mentions that Mrs. Bert Laudermilk

By March 1964, three of the colonial village buildings had been destroyed: the Virginia Tavern building had been removed and the Governor's Mansion and the Village Smithy had burned.¹¹ At that time, the Wakefield Cottage was in disrepair and for sale. Today the only remaining structure is the Old North Church which is currently occupied as a private residence.

History of Occupancy: Old North Church was occupied by members of the Presbyterian church during or before 1938. It remained a Presbyterian church until 1960 when the building was sold to the Unitarians. The deed dates November 21, 1960 and the sale was recorded on December 12, 1960. By 1987 the Unitarian congregation in Beverly Shores had dwindled so significantly that the members began to meet in each others homes and decided to put the church up for sale.¹² Michael Breen and his family purchased the building on June 29, 1988 after a protracted battle concerning waste disposal. He began renovating the church for use as a weekend residence in 1989.¹³

Sources: "A Century of Progress Paradox," Architectural Forum, 61 (November 1934): 374-379.

Breen, Michael, current owner of Old North Church, Beverly Shores. Interview by author, 6 August 1994. Tape recording. Historic American Buildings Survey, Washington, D.C.

Caldwell, Lori. "Replica of Historic Church Threatened." Post-Tribune (Porter County, IN) Sunday December 6, 1987 1.

"Chicagoans Buy Beverly Home; to Open Tea-Room," News-Dispatch (Michigan City, IN) September 1, 1938: 8.

wrote under the pseudonym Dorothy Raley and was the editor of the home and furnishings book published on the World's Fair houses.

¹¹ Millie Twedell, "Beverly Shores: Houses of the Past and Future Today," March 16 1964.

¹² Lori Caldwell, "Replica of Historic Church Threatened," Porter County (Indiana) Post-Tribune, 6 December 1987, 1.

¹³ Michael Breen, current owner of Old North Church, Beverly Shores, interview by author, 6 August 1994, tape recording, Historic American Buildings Survey, Washington, D.C.

"Off to a New Home," newspaper article in Ann Carlson's scrapbook, Beverly Shores, Indiana. Photocopy, Historians Files. Visitors' Center. Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Porter, Indiana.

"Start Work on Virginia Inn," newspaper article in Ann Carlson's scrapbook, Beverly Shores, Indiana. Photocopy, Historian's Files. Visitors' Center. Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Porter, Indiana.

"To Open 6 World's Fair Houses Soon for Inspection," newspaper article in Ann Carlson's scrapbook, Beverly Shores, Indiana. Photocopy, Historian's Files. Visitors' Center. Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Porter, Indiana.

Tallmadge, Thomas E. The Colonial Village: a Reproduction of Early American Life in the Thirteen Colonies, A Guide to the Buildings of Historical Interest at a Century of Progress. Chicago: Ben Franklin Print Shop, 1934.

Twedell, Millie. "Beverly Shores: Houses of the Past and Future-Today, 16 March 1964" Subject files. Westchester Public Library, Chesterton, IN.

Supplemental Material:

Early view of Old North Church at Beverly Shores. In collection of Michael Breen, current owner of the church. Beverly Shores, Indiana.

Map of the Colonial Village. Tallmadge, Thomas E. The Colonial Village: a Reproduction of Early American Life in the Thirteen Colonies, A Guide to the Buildings of Historical Interest at a Century of Progress. Chicago: Ben Franklin Print Shop, 1934, n.p.

Drawing showing Old North Church as it appeared at a Century of Progress. Tallmadge, Thomas E. The Colonial Village: a Reproduction of Early American Life in the Thirteen Colonies, A Guide to the Buildings of Historical Interest at a Century of Progress. Chicago: Ben Franklin Print Shop, 1934, n.p.

PROJECT INFORMATION:

Documentation of the Beverly Shores Century of Progress Homes and Historic District was undertaken in the summers of 1993 and 1994 by the Washington Office of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) of the National Park Service, Robert J. Kapsch, HABS/HAER Division Chief, and Paul D. Dolinsky, Chief of HABS. The project

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was cosponsored by the Midwest Regional Office of the National Park Service, Andrew Ketterson, Chief of Cultural Resources and Craig Kenkel, Regional Historic Architect. Additional support was provided by Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Dale Engquest, Superintendent and William Supernaugh, Assistant Superintendent. The project was directed by Frederick J. Lindstrom, HABS Supervisory Architect. The field documentation was completed by Project Supervisor, Judith E. Collins and Field Foremen: Joseph A. Boquiren and Laura J. Culberson, with Architecture Technicians: Bert V. Calhoun, II, Eric T. Helgoth, David M. Lefton, Michael J. Seibert, Lillian M. Smith and Lori A. Smith. The historical report and written building surveys were produced by Project Historian Maria F. Ali, under the direction of Catherine Lavoie, HABS Senior Historian and Sarah Allaback, HABS Historian. The large format photography was produced by HABS staff photographer Jack E. Boucher in 1994. Recognition must also go to the individual residents of the houses and the staff of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore for their cooperation and assistance.